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Living Thirsty: The Great Drinking Water Crisis

"The world needs to know that a billion people a year die from unsafe drinking water" - Kofi A. Annan

I stumbled into my journey with drinking water by chance. I was on a Zoom call with my grandmother in India, when I ran to my kitchen faucet to get some water to drink. My grandmother, who is on the board of an orphanage in India told me how the children in India cannot drink water from faucets as it is not clean. I was shocked and started to research what it takes to have access to drinking water that will not harm you. Clean drinking water is a basic necessity, but it is not yet a reality for many developing nations. I found that nonprofit organizations are helping developing nations, yet there is much more work to be done. I read on the EPA and CDC websites that globally close to 1.4 billion people drink water that is contaminated by fecal matter, driving fatalities. 30% of health facilities in low-income countries have no access to safe drinking water, impacting health. I became hooked to fight for this cause.

Last fall I developed a project for a science fair on how to test and improve rainwater for drinking purposes. I won environmental science awards, which fed my passion to work with water. Since then I have decided to pursue a career to help achieve better drinking water. There many ways to work in the water industry. My fervor for this cause along with my interests in environmental sciences, chemistry, laboratory work, field experimentation, humanitarian work, desire to travel with nonprofits to help

developing nations can be a great fit in the water industry. I also have a deep interest in public policy and government affairs. I can see this fitting well with working in the water industry. I could have a fantastic career in this field focused on chemical experimentation, educating communities, and water policy reform. Safe drinking water is vital to our health, communities, and economy. I admire the work being done by the EPA and the U.S. Army to follow the Clean Water Act, yet so much remains to be done to get more people high-quality drinking water. I want to be part of this water revolution.

My peers are not aware of this crisis so we must educate our future leaders. Many governments are starting to pay attention to improving drinking water. The U.S. Senate on April 29th overwhelmingly passed a \$35 billion bill to support water infrastructure on a bipartisan vote. The passing of this bill in a bipartisan way gives me immense hope that we can come together to fight for better water for all. Our nation now has the funds to employ people to educate, train and develop new entrants to this industry. The U.S. can become an example for the world. I want to be part of this work. We need more advocates from Generation X or “zoomers”, as we are called. In the words of Kailash Satyarthi, a human rights activist, “If not now, then when? If not you, then who?”

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